

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 MCT-01 SY-05

 NSC-05 SS-15 SP-02 L-03 TRSE-00 /059 W

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2192

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, BG

SUBJECT: INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SECURITY: BANGLADESH

REF: STATE 212490

1. SUMMARY. CHARGE AND EMBOFFS HAVE URGED BDG FOREIGN MINISTRY AND CIVIL AVIATION OFFICIALS TO RATIFY 1970 HAGUE AND 1971 MON-TREAL CONVENTIONS, WHICH BANGLADESH, ALTHOUGH ICAO MEMBER, HAS NOT YET DONE. AIRPORT SECURITY, ALTHOUGH CONSIDERABLY IMPROVED IN PAST TEN WEEKS, REMAINS INADEQUATE. FURTHER TELEGRAM WITH MISSION ASSESSMENT WILL FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

2. ECON COUNSELOR AND EMBOFF CALLED SEPTEMBER 15 ON DIRECTOR GENERAL CIVIL AVIATION, GROUP CAPTAIN SYED AHMED, AND MEMBERS OF HIS STAFF TO EMPHASIZE USG CONCERNS OVER AIRPORT SECURITY AS INSTRUCTED REFTEL. THERE ARE TWO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS IN BANGLADESH, ONE IN DACCA, THE OTHER, FAR LESS USED, AT CHITTAGONG.

3. AHMED STATED BDG SHARED USG CONCERNS OVER AIRPORT SECURITY AND IDENTIFIED FOLLOWING STEPS TAKEN OVER PAST TEN WEEKS TO TIGHTEN UP SECURITY AT DACCA INTERNATIONAL AND OTHER BDG AIRPORTS:

(A) ARMED GUARDS. THE BDG POSTED ARMED GUARDS AT ALL ITS AIRPORTS, INCLUDING DACCA AND CHITTAGONG;

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(B) ANTI-HIJACKING EQUIPMENT. IMPROVED HAND-HELD METAL DETECTORS

AND AN EXPLOSIVES DETECTOR WERE NOW IN USE AT BD AIRPORTS, INCLUDING DACCA AND CHITTAGONG. AT DACCA, VA METAL DETECTOR GATE HAD BEEN INSTALLED;

(C) BODY SEARCH. BOTH MALE AND FEMALE PASSENGERS NOW UNDERGO A BODY SEARCH AT ALL BD AIRPORTS;

(D) CHECKED LUGGAGE IDENTIFIED. BEFORE BOARDING FLIGHTS, PASSENGERS FILE PAST CHECKED LUGGAGE AND IDENTIFY EACH BAG BEFORE IT IS PLACED ON BOARD AIRCRAFT ON INTERNAL FLIGHTS. ALL HAND BAGS AND CARRY-ON LUGGAGE ARE SEARCHED;

(E) CLOSING OF OUTDOOR VISITORS' GALLERY. THE ROOFTOP GALLERY FORMERLY CROWDED WITH ONLOOKERS HAS BEEN CLOSED AT DACCA AIRPORT;

(F) TRANSIT LOUNGE SECURITY. THE RECENTLY COMPLETED NEW TRANSIT LOUNGE HAD BEEN BUILT WITH ONLY ONE DOOR TO FACILITATE CONTROL OF ACCESS AND SEGREGATION OF TRANSIT PASSENGERS.

4. COMMENT: THESE IMPROVEMENTS, UNDERTAKEN IN THE WAKE OF CONCERNS DETAILED IN OTHER EMBASSY REPORTING, HAVE INDEED STRENGTHENED AIRPORT SECURITY, BUT MOST AREAS OF DACCA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, INCLUDING THE TRANSIT LOUNGE, REMAIN RELATIVELY EASY FOR FOREIGNERS TO ENTER AND LEAVE. OUR OWN ASSESSMENT FOLLOWS BY SEPARATE TELEGRAM NEXT WEEK.

5. SYED AHMED WELCOMED USG APPROACH ON 1970 HAGUE AND 1971 MONTREAL CONVENTIONS FOR, HE SAID, HIS DIRECTORATE HAD BEEN PRESSING MFA FOR SOME TIME TO ADHERE TO THESE CONVENTIONS. BDG WAS ICAO MEMBER, BUT HAD YET TO ADHERE TO EITHER CONVENTION, AHMED SAID.

6. CHARGE AND POL COUNSELOR CONVEYED SEPTEMBER 16 TO MFA DIRECTOR GENERAL (AMERICAS) KAISER MURSHED USG CONCERNS (REFTEL) AND URGED PROMPT BDG ADHERENCE TO HAGUE AND MONTREAL CONVENTIONS. MURSHED LISTENED TO PRESENTATION, BUT DID NOT OFFER AN INDICATION OF BDG ATTITUDE.
CHESLAW

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